



## ELK GROVE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

Fire ■ Emergency Medical Services ■ Parks & Recreation

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

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### Public Service Announcement

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### ELK GROVE FIRE OFFICIALS STRESS SAFETY OVER JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> HOLIDAY

**Elk Grove, CA** – Fourth of July is one holiday that firefighters dread. Not because they don't love their country, but putting patriotism aside, the holiday presents a heightened risk for fires and serious injuries in Elk Grove and elsewhere throughout the country. As fireworks stands go up, Elk Grove Community Services District (CSD) fire officials are making their own plans for July 4<sup>th</sup> that include fireworks booth inspections, patrols for illegal fireworks, and heightened staffing levels to respond to a possible increase in the number of emergency calls.

Elk Grove CSD Fire Department joins other Sacramento area fire service agencies again this year as part of the Greater Sacramento Fireworks Task Force to encourage the public's cooperation to ensure a "safe and sane" Fourth of July. Elk Grove residents are encouraged to call **1-888-723-3484 (1-888-SAFE 4TH)** to report the unlawful use and/or possession of illegal fireworks and the unsafe use of those fireworks deemed "safe and sane" by the State Fire Marshal's Office.



"The safest way to enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup> is to attend a public fireworks show," says Elk Grove CSD Fire Chief, Keith Grueneberg. "We realize that many people still prefer to stay home or attend neighborhood parties that use amateur fireworks, and for those folks we urge extreme caution."

Grueneberg notes that many neighborhood parties may have a mixture of legal and illegal fireworks on hand. By simple definition, illegal fireworks are any devices that fly through the air, dart across the ground, or explode. For those caught with illegal fireworks, Grueneberg warns that Elk Grove emergency responders will adhere to a zero tolerance policy. "We are big believers in the 'No More Mr. Nice Guy' school of thought," says Grueneberg.

Special fireworks enforcement units staffed by Elk Grove Police Department officers and Elk Grove CSD Fire Department fire investigators will patrol Elk Grove leading up to and during the Independence Day holiday. Fire crews will also patrol neighborhoods while in service for

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calls during the 4<sup>th</sup>. Violators may be cited, arrested, or could face up to three years of informal probation and/or five days in County Jail. Individuals prosecuted for the use of illegal fireworks may receive three years of informal probation and 10 days in County Jail. Those prosecuted for Child Endangerment face three years of informal probation and 45 days in the County Jail.

Those in possession of illegal fireworks have an opportunity to avoid penalties by turning in these unused items at any Elk Grove fire station. Sacramento area explosives teams will destroy confiscated fireworks after the holiday.

California remains among 43 states in the U.S. that still permit the use of some fireworks. Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont have banned amateur fireworks use. Those who consider using fireworks at home should consider all of the safety risks beforehand and initiate the proper safety precautions, especially if those parties include children in attendance.

“A sparkler can reach temperatures of up to 1200 degrees, almost the same temperature as a red hot stove burner,” explains CSD Information Officer, Kristyn Staby. “You don’t want something that hot near little hands. Keep kids at a safe distance from fireworks, maintain a close eye on them, and don’t allow children to use or ignite fireworks – even those deemed ‘safe and sane.’”

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an estimated 8,800 people suffered fireworks related injuries in the U.S. in 2002 that were severe enough to require treatment in hospital emergency rooms. The majority of those injuries were burns. According to the NFPA, most fireworks injuries occurred using personal fireworks considered legal.

Stay safe over Independence Day. If you’re going to celebrate, the men and women of the Elk Grove CSD Fire Department encourage you to attend a professional fireworks show such as the Salute to the Red, White, and Blue show scheduled at Elk Grove Regional Park. Should you use personal fireworks, however, please consider these safety tips:

- ❑ Use only fireworks deemed “Safe and Sane” bearing the California State Office of the Fire Marshal approved seal. Buy your fireworks from a licensed retailer to help ensure that the devices you use are legal.
- ❑ Keep children away from all fireworks and lighting devices.
- ❑ Locate your fireworks display area away from combustible materials including dry vegetation.
- ❑ Keep a charged garden hose and bucket of water close by during any personal fireworks display.

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